

## News Release

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### **AbilityOne announced as new name for the Federal procurement program employing people who are blind or severely disabled under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act**

AbilityOne will become the new name of a longstanding procurement program employing people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities under the auspices of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. According to Andrew D. Houghton, Chairperson of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee), AbilityOne will replace the "JWOD" acronym, but does not change the underlying law, which was established to create job opportunities for people who are blind or severely disabled in the manufacture and delivery of products and services for the Federal Government. Today, this program is the single largest employer of people with severe disabilities in the United States, with more than 46,000 jobs nationwide.

The Committee, the independent Federal agency that administers the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, determined that the program's future success requires an enhanced ability to communicate its purpose and value to others. After a long-term, comprehensive study, the Committee decided that "AbilityOne" best fit its criteria for an effective name, and published its decision in the November 28, 2006 Federal Register. "AbilityOne has a much closer linkage to the program's workforce and capabilities, and alludes to the convergence of all participants into one umbrella program," said Mr. Houghton. "A stronger, more unified name will help us increase overall awareness, understanding and support for our program, and ultimately, to better fulfill our employment mission."

While the enabling Act remains important and its sponsors retain their place of honor in the program's history, the Committee believes that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to build a program identity beyond the legislation in order to fulfill its mission, Mr. Houghton said. "We honor our founders by maximizing employment for people who are blind or severely disabled, and we believe that as AbilityOne, we are better positioned to succeed in our goals."

To ensure that all stakeholders familiar with the JWOD acronym are able to recognize and transfer their support to the new program name, the Committee will continue to use Javits-Wagner-O'Day along with AbilityOne for a transition period of about 18 months. An unveiling of the new name and graphic design is expected in early Spring 2007. The well-recognized SKILCRAFT® brand will continue to be licensed and managed by National Industries for the Blind for a wide range of products furnished to the Government under Javits-Wagner-O'Day authority, and is not affected by the program name change.

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The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent Federal agency responsible for administering the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. The JWOD Act creates employment for people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities in the manufacture and delivery of products and services to the Federal Government. For more information, visit [www.jwod.gov](http://www.jwod.gov).